DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 044 114 JC 700 259

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TITLE Non-Persisting and Persisting Transfer Program Students.
PUB DATE [69]
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the EPDA Institute for Advanced Study in Student Personnel Work in Junior Colleges and Technical Institutes, University of Missouri, Columbia, Sept. 9, 1969 to June 1, 1970

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.60
DESCRIPTORS *Dropout Identification, *Dropout Research, Institutional Research, *Junior Colleges, *Junior College Students, *Persistence, Prediction
IDENTIFIERS *Missouri, School and College Ability Test, Survey of Interpersonal Values

ABSTRACT

Differences between 20 transfer program persisters (p) and 23 non-persisters (np) on five measures were investigated to identify elements that might characterize persistence. The subjects consisted of freshmen enrolled in the transfer program at Crowder College (Misscuri) during the fall of 1967. A comparison of each group's composite School and College Ability Test performance shows similar percentages scoring between 71-80, but a clearly greater percentage of persisters scoring between 51-70. Results on the Survey of Interpersonal Values suggest that the groups are more alike than different, with most scores clustering around the "average" category on five of the six values. Both groups scored somewhat lower in the leadership category. Subsequent enrollment in a 4-year college or university was reported for half the non-persisters and three-fourths of the persisters. Seventy-five per cent of the persisters' mothers and 82 per cent of the non-persisters' mothers completed high school. Most subjects in each group (p--80 per cent; np--56 per cent) wanted to attend college and were supported in this decision by both parents; however, 17 per cent of the non-persisters did not want to attend, but were encouraged to do so by at least one parent. While generalizations about indicative characteristics are limited because of the small sample size, the nature of the results suggests that replication of the study on a larger level would be valuable. (JO)

ED044114

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NON-PERSISTING AND PERSISTING TRANSFER PROGRAM STUDENTS

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Each semester student personnel workers, administrators and others concerned with student welfare are perplexed by varying numbers of college and university drop-outs. According to Summerskill (1962), only one-third of these leave school for academic reasons. The remaining two-thirds, and indeed, possibly a great many of the one-third, represent opportunities for student personnel workers, especially counselors, to guide students toward realistic and beneficial choices.

A survey of the literature shows many attempts to factor out elements contributing to persistence. Generally, financial problems, illness, secondary school grades, scholastic aptitude, mothers' education level, parental support and motivation have been found to be the dimensions which differentiate persisters from non-persisters. In an effort to get at motivational differences between the two groups many researchers have begun to look at differences in values and how they affect persistence.

Most of the available literature is based upon students in four year colleges. Since the differences between students in community colleges and four year colleges and universities have been established, generalizations made from the literature to community colleges should be made with caution.

This paper reports the findings of a study conducted to see if differences existed between transfer program, community college persisters and non-persisters. The two groups were compared on a) present status, b) mothers' educational level, c) amount of parental support of college attendance, d) academic aptitude, and e) values.

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METHOD

Subjects

Freshmen enrolled in the college transfer program at Crowder College in the fall of 1967 were used as subjects.

Instrumentation

Data was obtained from two instruments, the School and College Ability Test (SCAT) and the Survey of Interpersonal Values (SIV).

The composite score of the SCAT, for each subject, was obtained as a measure of academic aptitude.

The SIV was developed to measure six values regarding an individual's relationship to other people and their relationship to him. A high score on a scale means that the subject values the dimension being tested. A low score indicates that a person doesn't value that dimension. The six scales and their meaning are listed below.

S - Support: Being treated with understanding, receiving encouragement from other people, being treated with kindness and consideration.

C - Conformity: Doing what is socially correct, following regulations closely, doing what is accepted and proper, being a conformist.

R - Recognition: Being looked up to and admired, being considered important, attracting favorable notice, achieving recognition.

I - Independence: Having the right to do whatever one wants to do, being free to make one's own decisions, being able to do things in one's own way.

B - Benevolence: Doing things for other people, sharing with others, helping the unfortunate, being generous.

L - Leadership: Being in charge of other people, having authority over others, being in a position of leadership or power. (Gordon, 1960)

Other Data

The subjects were surveyed to obtain the following information.

a) Current status

b) Mother's educational level

c) Indication of parental influence concerning education

Data Analysis

Do persisters differ from non-persisters on SCAT scores, SIV scores, current status, mother's educational level and indication of parental support?

Persisters are defined as those who entered the Crowder College transfer program in the fall of 1967, and completed that program in the spring of 1969. Non-persisters are those students who enrolled in the transfer program in the fall of 1967 but left school before completion of the program.

RESULTS

The current status of the subjects is shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

It should be noted that over one-half of the non-persisters and three-fourths of the persisters are now enrolled in a four year college or university. The large "other category" found for the non-persisters consists mainly of male subjects in the armed services.

Table 2 shows the educational level of the subjects' mothers. It is interesting to note that 81.8 per cent of the non-persister's mothers and

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Insert Table 2 about here

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75 per cent of the persisters' mothers have a high school diploma or better.

An indication of parental support was obtained from the student is reported in Table 3. The majority of both persisters and non-persisters

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Insert Table 3 about here

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wanted to go to college and were supported by both of their parents. A small percentage (17.3) of the non-persisters did not wish to attend college but were encouraged by their parents to do so.

Insert Table 4 about here

The composite SCAT scores reported in table four.

Tables five and six report the results of the SIV for both groups. The subjects' scores are reported in five categories under each scale of the test. These categories are very high (VH), high (H), average (A), low (L), and very low (VL). The subjects are separated by sex (men in table 5, women in table 6) in addition to non-persisters and persisters due to the norming of the test. The results indicate that the non-persisters and persisters are more alike

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Insert Tables 5 & 6 here

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than different. Most of the scores tend to cluster around the average category. The most notable deviation from the average category is the low value ascribed to leadership. This is found to be true of persisters, non-persisters, men and women.

DISCUSSION

A major limitation of this study is the small numbers. It is difficult to make many generalizations based upon so few subjects. The nature of the

results indicates that it might be worthwhile to undertake some aspects of this study again with a larger number of subjects from Crowder College.

Table one shows that a very high percentage of transfer program students continue their education at a four-year institution. Even a majority of the non-persisters overcome their obstacle and enroll in college. Crowder College can be proud of this unusually high percentage.

Carter and McGinnis in Stein (1963) found that the mother's graduation from high school was the most significant element in the prediction of college success. This is borne out by the data found in Table 2. The strong parental support of the educational objective of the subjects is laudable also.

The low value placed on leadership by the majority of students suggests a possibility for further study and perhaps implementation by the faculty and staff at Crowder. Low scores on this scale often reflect a lack of experience and hesitancy to try leadership activities. Leadership training seminars and expanded opportunities to develop leadership experience might be very appropriate for the students at Crowder.

TABLE 1

CURRENT STATUS OF SUBJECTS

	Non-persisters n=23	Persisters n=20
Working full-time	17.3	10.5
Attending a four year college	52.1	78.9
Other	30.4	10.5

TABLE 2

MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

	Non-persisters n=23	Persisters n=20
0-8 years	0	5
9-11 years	18.1	20
12 years	40.9	65
College attendance	40.9	10

TABLE 3

INDICATION OF PARENTAL SUPPORT

	Non-persisters n = 23	Persisters n = 20
1. Subjects wanted to attend college-both parents agreed.	56.5	80.0
2. Subjects wanted to attend college-both parents disagreed.	26.0	15.0
3. Subject wanted to attend college-one parent agreed, one parent disagreed.	0.0	5.0
4. Subjects did not want to attend college-parents disagreed so subject attended.	17.3	0.0

TABLE 4

SCAT COMPOSITE SCORES

	Non-persisters n = 23	Persisters n = 20
31-50	65.1	50.0
51-70	30.3	45.0
71-80	4.3	5.0

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF NON-PERSISTING AND PERSISTING MEN ON THE SIV SCALES

Support	N	Non-persisters	N	Persisters
VH	0	0	0	0
H	3	20.0	4	33.3
A	8	53.3	7	58.3
L	3	20.0	1	8.3
VL	1	6.6	0	0
	15		12	
Conformity				
VH	1	6.6	1	8.3
H	5	33.3	4	33.3
A	6	40.0	5	41.6
L	1	6.6	1	8.3
VL	2	13.3	1	8.3
	15			
Recognition				
VH	2	13.3	1	8.3
H	1	6.6	3	25.0
A	8	53.3	4	33.3
L	3	20.0	2	16.6
VL	1	6.6	2	16.6
	15			
Independence				
VH	1	6.6	1	8.3
H	2	13.3	3	25.0
A	7	46.6	3	25.0
L	3	20.0	5	41.6
VL	1	13.3	0	0
	15			
Benevolence				
VH	1	6.6	0	0
H	6	40.0	5	41.6
A	6	40.0	5	41.6
L	2	13.3	2	16.6
VL	0	0	0	0
	15		12	
Leadership				
VH	0	0	0	0
H	0	0	1	8.3
A	3	20.0	3	25.0
L	10	66.6	5	41.6
VL	2	13.3	3	25.0
	15		12	

TABLE 6

COMPARISON OF NON-PERSISTING AND PERSISTING WOMEN ON THE SIV

Support	N	Non-persisters	N	Persisters
VH	1	12.4	1	12.4
H	1	12.4	2	25.0
A	3	37.5	4	50.0
L	2	25.0	1	12.4
VL	1	12.4	0	0
	8		8	
Conformity				
VH	0	0	0	0
H	1	12.4	4	50.0
A	5	62.4	3	37.5
L	0	0	0	0
VL	2	25.0	1	12.4
	8		8	
Recognition				
VH	0	0	0	0
H	2	25.0	5	62.4
A	2	25.0	2	25.0
L	3	37.5	0	0
VL	1	12.4	1	12.4
	8		8	
Independence				
VH	1	12.4	1	12.4
H	1	12.4	1	12.4
A	5	62.4	2	25.0
L	1	12.4	2	25.0
VL	0	0	2	25.0
	8		8	
Benevolence				
VH	2	25.0	0	0
H	2	25.0	0	0
A	2	25.0	4	50.0
L	2	25.0	3	37.5
VL			1	12.4
Leadership				
VH	0	0	0	0
H	1	12.4	0	0
A	2	25.0	5	62.4
L	3	37.5	1	12.4
VL	2	25.0	2	25.0

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